DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 173 051 RC 011 544

AUTHOR Boudreaux, Ernest
TITLE Indian Career Education: The Mississippi Choctaw Experience.
SPONS AGENCY Bureau of Indian Affairs (Dept. of Interior), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE May 79
NOTE 8p.
JOURNAL CIT BIA Education Research Bulletin; v7 n2 May 1979

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Education; *American Indians; *Career Awareness; Career Choice; *Career Education; Career Opportunities; *Counseling; Elementary Secondary Education; *High School Students; Occupational Choice; Reservations (Indian); Resource Centers; Role Models; Rural Education; Tribes
IDENTIFIERS Bureau of Indian Affairs; *Choctaw (Tribe); Mississippi

ABSTRACT

The Choctaw Career Education Program, established in 1975 to serve grades K-12 in six BIA-operated Choctaw schools, is an attempt to provide a long-term solution to the problem of limited occupational and career choices for Mississippi Choctaw students. The two-component program is supported by a Career Resource Center. The K-8 component develops self- and career awareness at the elementary grades and explores various career clusters at the junior high level. Aided by two career curriculum specialists, teachers have integrated career education into nearly every elementary and junior high class. Generally, teachers at that level have a positive view of career education and of the program. The high school component consists of career counseling for students, especially upperclassmen, several times per year. Counseling deals with self-concept, values clarification, objective decision making, and goal formulation. Despite many problems, the program is accomplishing its aims. Noticeable impact is expected in the next three to six years. However, the program cannot compensate for poor academic preparation or lack of academic skills. Therefore, Indian education should be culturally pluralistic so that Indian students can function in both cultures. School curriculum should be measurable and learning for the "real world" should be essential in secondary education. (SB)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED173051

# BIA Education Research Bulletin

- IN THIS ISSUE -

When is Disadvantagement of an
Indian Student a Handicap?
Jeanette C. Smith

Indian Career Education
The Mississippi Choctaw Experience
Ernest Boudreaux

Ute Indian Teacher Training Program
Uintah and Ouray Reservation
Forrest S. Cuch

Indian Students' Problems in Boarding Schools
Ruth V. Klinekole

A Dissertation Abstract: Analysis of Post Secondary
Education of the Jicarilla Apaches
Lester Sandoval

Volume 7 May 1979 Number 2

RC 011544

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Ernest Boudreaux

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Cecil Andrus, Secretary

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
Forrest Gerard

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, INDIAN AFFAIRS
Rick Lavis

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
Martin E. Seneca, Acting

OFFICE OF INDIAN EDUCATION PROGRAMS
Earl J. Barlow, Director

INDIAN EDUCATION RESOURCES CENTER
William Benham, Jr., Administrator

DIVISION OF EVALUATION, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
Thomas R. Hopkins, Chief

BRANCH OF RESEARCH
Eugene Leitka

THEME: SCHOOLS BELONG TO THE PEOPLE

## CONTENTS

When is Disadvantagement of an Indian Student a Handicap? ..... 1

Indian Career Education
The Mississippi Choctaw Experience ..... 7
Ernest Boudreaux

Ute Indian Teacher Training Program
Uintah and Ouray Reservation ..... 11
Forrest S. Cuch

Indian Students' Problems in Boarding Schools ..... 16
Ruth V. Klinekole

A Dissertation Abstract: Abstract of Post-Secondary Education of the Jicarilla Apaches ..... 26
Lester Sandoval

Correction Insert ..... 29

Authors' Page ..... 28

Inside Back Cover
Guidelines for Submissions of Articles
Research Council
Editor

The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors and are not necessarily of the Bureau of Indian Affairs or the BIA Research Council.

PUBLISHED PERIODICALLY BY THE
DIVISION OF EVALUATION, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
FOR TEACHERS AND EDUCATORS WHO ARE DEDICATED
TO IMPROVING INDIAN EDUCATION

## *INDIAN CAREER EDUCATION: THE MISSISSIPPI CHOCTAW EXPERIENCE*

*by*

*Ernest Boudreaux*

### Introduction

Indians attending rural reservation schools have limited exposure to a variety of occupations and occupational role models. Such has been the case with the Mississippi Choctaws. In 1973 a study (Spencer) of Choctaw Indian high school students attending the reservation high school concluded that students (1) aspired to a narrow range of occupations—primarily those that had been attained by other Choctaws, (2) rarely received meaningful vocational advice from adults in their lives, and (3) had few occupational role models.[1] Subsequent diagnostic testing (Table 1) using the Kuder E supported Spencer's earlier findings.[2]

Table 1
Kuder Interest Areas Showing the Highest Percentile Scores of Choctaw High School Students

| Interest Areas | Total[a] | Males[a] | Females[a] |
|---|---|---|---|
| | (N=86) | (N=47) | (N=) |
| Outdoor | 30.2 | 14.9 | 48.7 |
| Mechanical | 24.4 | 21.3 | 28.2 |
| Computational | 20.9 | 12.8 | 30.8 |
| Scientific | 9.3 | 0.0 | 20.5 |
| Persuasive | 16.3 | 10.6 | 23.1 |
| Artistic | 41.9 | 59.6 | 20.5 |
| Literary | 26.7 | 31.9 | 20.5 |
| Musical | 32.6 | 46.8 | 15.4 |
| Social Service | 59.3 | 70.2 | 46.2 |
| Clerical | 38.3 | 31.9 | 46.2 |

[a]As students are represented in the three interest areas in which they had their highest percentile scores, column total 300%.

Occupational role models on the reservation are few. Those that do exist are primarily in the areas of health, education, social services, clerical, and unskilled and semi-skilled blue collar jobs, i.e., bus driver, janitor and maintenance persons.

### Problem

How to overcome environmental constraints and expand occupational/career choices for Choctaw students.

As a reaction to this problem, the Choctaw Career Education Program was started in 1975 by the Choctaw School Board. The Career

Education Program is a comprehensive K through 12 program which serves six Bureau of Indian Affairs operated Choctaw schools. The program is designed to provide a long term solution to the aforestated problem.

Program Design/Tentative Assessment

In initiating a comprehensive career education program, it was necessary to consider short and long term needs, dealing with the immediate needs of high school students and at the same time developing a comprehensive approach to attack the problem in question. An elementary/junior high component was established to provide a foundation. It provides the basis for further development through high school counseling. The secondary component, career counseling, must satisfy a more immediate need, that of the junior and senior students, and yet be able to mesh with the long term effort being made by the elementary/junior high component.

Acquiring career or career-related resources was one of the first needs met. As the number and diversity of the software increased, a Career Resource Center was established to serve all schools. The current resource center holdings exceed 3,000 items and includes kits, filmstrips, cassettes, games, books, films, video tapes, and posters. Much of the success in "selling" the elementary and junior high teachers on career education can be attributed to the availability of an abundant and diverse supply of up-to-date career related resources. In addition to providing resources directly to teachers, a librarian also works closely with students, primarily high school students, by providing assistance and counseling. The resource center is also beginning a collection of environmental and enrichment materials which is part of the "change agent" role the resource center is involved in.

The most widely used career model, and that used by the Choctaw Career Education Program, calls for the development of self and career awareness in the elementary grades and the exploring of various career clusters at the junior high level. In an effort to better define the direction of the program, a review of the literature was conducted and a set of culturally adapted career goals and objectives were formulated for grades K through 8th. Two career curriculum specialists visited fifty teachers each week to provide technical assistance and resource materials. Career education is infused into on-going classroom activities in K through 8th grades. To this end the career staff prepared sample lesson plans illustrating how lessons could be made career relevant, visited each teacher each week to let them know that the career staff was available, held conferences with teachers to discuss forthcoming units of study and ways of infusing career education into such units, and also held occasional workshops for teaching staff and administrators.

Career education is currently integrated into almost every elementary and junior high school class. The intensity of activity varies from classroom to classroom. It is apparent that meeting the set of career education goals and objectives by teachers and administrators is not a priority in the school system at this time.

A recent sampling of elementary and junior high teachers reveals

that (1) teachers (86%) felt that the career goals and objectives were relevant to their grade and could easily be integrated into their teaching plans, (2) ninety-three percent felt that career education would benefit Choctaws, (3) more than half (58%) felt that they would continue with career education if the program would terminate, (4) seventy-five percent felt that their administrators encouraged and supported the use of career education, and (5) all teachers felt that the career education staff was helpful. From such data, it can be concluded that teachers in general have a positive view of career education and activities of the Choctaw Career Education Program.

Up to fifteen students are scheduled daily for one hour sessions by the high school career counselors. In an effort to add uniformity and to develop a systematic way of helping students, a career counseling model was developed. The topics dealt with in the counseling program are self concept, values clarification, objective decision making, goal formulation, and medium range planning. It is planned that every high school student will be counseled several times during the academic year with more attention directed toward upper classmen than lower. For many students, visiting a counselor on a regular basis is a new experience. If the career counseling component can succeed in having students examine their own feelings, and teach them to think rationally in making decisions and attempt to plan their future, a great deal will have been accomplished.

Despite many adversities over the last three years, i.e., staff turnover, coordination and cooperation problems with school administration, and staff members lacking work experience and knowledge of the Choctaw culture, the counseling program is moving toward accomplishing what it was designed to do. The counseling model needs to be finalized. Several diagnostic instruments have been used—GATB/NATB, PIES, WRAT, Kuder, and Tennessee Self Concept. The development of norms on the population has begun. A semester-long career orientation class complements the high school counseling program. This class provides an overview of the various career clusters and is required for graduation. A career orientation class was established to meet, in part, the immediate information needs of present high school students.

The problem of Choctaw students not having sufficient career-related information/experiences to broaden their perceptions is changing. If the career education program is continued as designed, a noticeable impact should be evident over the next three to six years. Nevertheless, career education is not a cure-all. It cannot compensate for poor academic preparation, or for lack of the necessary skills and knowledge that would be needed for a productive life either in an Indian or non-Indian environmental setting. To entice or encourage students to pursue careers without a complementary effort being made to prepare them adequately may be performing a disservice to the students. Through testing and personal contact, the Career Education staff has found that the average tenth grade Choctaw student is functioning academically between the 6.5 to 7.5 grade levels. Many students cannot do simple math. Communication, both orally and in writing, is often poor, and a general apathy among the student body prevails. To make career education work, school administrators,

Tribal leaders, school board members, and parents must insure that their school is meeting the future needs of students. Proficiency in the basic academic skills is a must.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations do not represent new ideas. Nevertheless, they do deserve repeating. If the introduction of career education is seriously being considered or career education is already taking place in your school district, the following recommendations should be examined closely.

1. Indian education should be culturally pluralistic. It is important that students understand themselves through a better understanding of their own culture. Conversely, economic necessity may dictate that Indians function in a non-Indian/non-reservation setting. Then it becomes necessary that individuals understand and be prepared to function in "mainstream America." Students should understand and be prepared to deal with behavioral changes that are necessary when making the transition from one culture to the other.

2. A school curriculum should be a measureable curriculum. Achievement of goals and objectives should be the basis by which students progress from one level to the next. Assurances need be built into the curriculum that guarantees acceptable performance or competencies in various academic or study areas so students will no longer graduate not being able to perform basic academic skills which are a necessity in western society.

3. Learning for the "real world" should be one of the many themes in secondary education. Accompanying such a theme should be other learning options in addition to or in lieu of classroom activities, i.e., experience-based career education.

Career education can expand horizons for Indian students. In achieving such expansion, care should be taken to insure the maintenance of individual identity—the maintenance of one's Indianness, and yet still provide the "tools" that are necessary to achieve economic and personal success.

## REFERENCES


[1]Spencer, Barbara G., Gerald O. Windham, and John H. Peterson Jr., "Occupational Orientations of an American Indian Group," in J. Steven Picou and Robert E. Campbell, eds., *Career Behavior of Special Groups*. (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Pub. Co.), 1975, pp. 199-219.

Spencer, Barbara G., "Study of Occupational Aspirations and Expectations of Choctaw High School Students." BIA Education Research Bulletin 3 (3): 1-3, 1975.

[2]Spencer, Barbara G., Ernest Boudreaux, and John Mullins, "Using the 'Kuder E' with Choctaw Students." *Journal of American Indian Education*, 15: 30-34, 1976.